

INTERNATIONAL CYCLE SPORT

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SINCE this may be our last opportunity to do so, we extend our good wishes to the cyclists selected to represent the home countries in the Commonwealth Games. We stress "home countries" since we acknowledge that the four nations have separate representation, although for Olympic purposes they are classed as one.

The English entries were virtually self-selecting; the lack of the storms of abuse which customarily follows the picking of a team for such an event proves that this is so. While admitting that riders like Jocelyn Lovell, Gordon Johnson and Bruce Biddle have proved their worth at more rigorous levels of competition, we feel that the riders wearing English jerseys should generally be expected to do well.

Nowhere can this be truer than in the road race, where the quartet is of high quality and covers all abilities needed: we have a climber, a sprinter, a "rouleur" and a rider who can go alone.

We extend our thoughts to Sandy Gilchrist who has figured on the diplomatic chessboard this year. Fully accepted by the members of the national squad, he was then chosen by two teams for the Milk Race. Now he rides for his own country, competing against those who have been his colleagues for most of the year.

Surely it is time that teams representing the countries which together form the United Kingdom were the subject of an enquiry launched by the Sports Council. At the United

Nations we have one vote, like France, Germany or any other state. In Olympic competitions we have one team, like France, Germany or any other state. We will refrain from commenting on Scotland's early exclusion from the World Cup save to suggest that a team representing the United Kingdom would, we feel, have been favourites for the trophy.

In making this point, we are not entering the political arena. We take sides neither with nationalism nor with collectivism. We are pointing out that our sportsmen generally, and our cyclists specifically, are asked to change their allegiances in a way which is less than fair to them. As long as the United Kingdom is recognised as a single sovereign state, whether for better or for worse, we feel that teams in the Commonwealth Games should be selected by and on behalf of that single sovereign state.

If the demands for some degree of autonomy in Scotland and Wales, not to mention the sad situation in Ulster which Irish cyclists mock by displaying their goodwill every time they represent an all-Ireland team—like their counterparts in international rugby—are granted, then it will be time to discuss the possible entry of separate teams in all world competitions.

Both now, and in the future, we should prefer to see a consistent policy, one which is dictated by sportsmen rather than by politicians. We call upon the Sports Council to give us the lead.

Front Cover: Top men in the Giro d'Italia are caught together by Sergio Penazzo our on the spot photographer. (left to right) Johan DeMuynck (1st), Gibi Baronchelli (2nd) and Francesco Moser (3rd).

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